

CLAIMS:

1. An endo-tracheal tube retainer used to facilitate the removal of a laryngeal mask of the type used to facilitate lung ventilation and the insertion of endo-tracheal tubes or related medical instruments through a patient's laryngeal opening, said laryngeal mask being removed from a patient's oropharynx without dislodging any inserted endo-tracheal tubes or related medical instruments passing through the laryngeal mask into the patient's tracheal tube, said endo-tracheal tube retainer comprising:

a semi-rigid stylet rod having proximal and distal ends; and

a connection adapter tapered from a proximal end of said connection adapter to a distal end of said connection adapter for secure insertion within a range of endo-tracheal tubes, said adapter being secured to said distal end of said solid stylet rod.

2. The endo-tracheal tube retainer of claim 1 wherein said endotracheal tube retainer is used to facilitate the removal of a laryngeal mask of the type having a flexible respiratory tube, and said endo-tracheal tube retainer is sufficiently small in diameter to pass through said flexible respiratory tube.

3. The endo-tracheal tube retainer of claim 1 wherein said stylet is adapted for use independently of the endo-tracheal tube as an intubating style.

4. The endo-tracheal tube retainer of claim 2 wherein said semi-rigid stylet is of sufficient length to extend from the laryngeal opening to a point external to a patient's oral cavity.

5. The endo-tracheal tube retainer of claim 1 wherein said connection adapter is removably secured to said semi-rigid stylet by means of a threaded connector.

6. The endo-tracheal tube retainer of claim 1 wherein an exterior surface of said connection adapter comprises:

a plurality of longitudinal grooves permitting passage of air and fluids past said endo-tracheal tube retainer after insertion within an endo-tracheal tube; and

5 a plurality of threads angled to facilitate insertion of said endo-tracheal tube retainer within an endo-tracheal tube, but hindering withdrawal of said endo-tracheal tube retainer from said endo-tracheal tube.

7. The endo-tracheal tube retainer of claim 6 wherein the connection adapter is composed of soft, semi-rigid material, sufficiently flexible to permit said connection adapter to traverse through said endo-tracheal tube after positioning within the oropharynx region.

8. The endo-tracheal tube retainer of claim 6 wherein said longitudinal grooves are equi-spaced around said connection adapter exterior surface.

9. The endo-tracheal tube retainer of claim 8 wherein there are at least four longitudinal grooves.

10. A method for removing an inflatable laryngeal mask from a patient without dislodging an inserted mask into the patient's laryngeal opening by using a tube retaining device, the method comprising the steps of:

inserting the tube retaining device through the inflatable laryngeal mask opening exterior to the oral cavity;

20 securing the tube retaining device within the proximal end of a previously inserted endo-tracheal tube within said inflatable laryngeal mask;

deflating said inflatable laryngeal mask;

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simultaneously withdrawing said deflated inflatable laryngeal mask from the patient's oral cavity and inserting a retaining force on the tube retaining device sufficient to prevent friction from dislodging said endo-tracheal tube; and

sliding the inflatable laryngeal mask off the proximal end of said tube retaining device.

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